MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
20 JUNE 1962

The Commission met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m., with David E. Finley, Chairman, presiding.

Present were: David E. Finley
Felix W. de Weldon
Douglas W. Orr
William G. Perry
Michael Rapuano
Ralph Walker

L. R. Wilson, Secretary
Charles H. Atherton, Asst. Secy
C. L. Martin, Counsel
Susan E. Bennett, Admin. Asst.
Gilbert Halasz, Recorder

SUBMISSIONS-REVIEWS-INTERVIEWS

1. Department of Interior, National Park Service

Washington Planetarium and Space Center, Daingerfield Island - Proposed Design

Mr. Robert Horne, Acting Regional Director, Region Six, National Park Service, explained that the site for the building on Daingerfield Island, just north of Alexandria, Virginia, had been approved by the National Park Service and the National Capital Planning Commission as a suitable location for a facility of the type proposed.

Mr. Herman Weinstein and Mr. Michael Shea, representing the Washington Planetarium and Space Center, Inc., which will finance construction of the building, briefly explained the need for a planetarium and space center and the nature of the non-profit educational and scientific organization which will operate it.

Mr. Robert Calhoun Smith, architect, explained that the building as proposed would consist of two parts: a circular viewing chamber, 85 feet in diameter, containing the projection instrument; and space around the perimeter of the chamber containing exhibition areas, classrooms and administrative offices. It is proposed that the hemispherical dome of the projection chamber would be constructed of thin shelled reinforced concrete and the serrated roof around the perimeter would consist of folded plate or precast concrete sections.

After discussing some of the details of construction the Commission approved the general concept of the design for the building.

As to the site plan, the members expressed the opinion that the relationship of the building to the parking facilities and the Potomac River should be further studied. They pointed out that the flat and open nature of the site permitted a number of alternative locations for siting of the building and parking areas and should be considered in further studies. In their opinion, the principal objection to the proposed site plan concerned the view of the building seen by visitors from Mount Vernon Memorial Parkway, which would be obscured by the parking facilities in the foreground. It was suggested that the architect consider relocating the parking areas and possibly making variations in level between the terrain and building in order to afford a better visibility of the dome. Mr. Smith agreed to make further studies of the site plan and to submit them to the Commission when ready.

The Chairman was authorized to send a letter to the National Park Service setting forth the Commission's recommendations. EXHIBIT A

2. District of Columbia Government, Department of Buildings and Grounds
Garrison School, 13th and S Streets, N.W.

Mr. G. A. Purcell, Liaison Officer, D. C. Department of Buildings and Grounds, explained the proposed design for a two-story elementary school, to be constructed of cast stone spandrels, reinforced concrete, and Occoquan brick.

The members were of the opinion that the design of several basic features could be improved; e.g., the service access to utility rooms, the overall plan arrangement, and details of the main entrance. However, they withheld their recommendations after noting that contract drawings had already been prepared, and consequently, major revisions of the plans would be required if any of their recommendations were to be carried out. Instead, they reluctantly approved the general design, and requested that in the future proposed designs be presented in preliminary form.

The Secretary was directed to prepare a letter setting forth the Commission's views. EXHIBIT B

3. General Services Administration, Public Buildings Service

a. Howard University, Women's Dormitory - Revised Plan

Mr. Hilyard R. Robinson, architect, presented drawings and renderings showing further development of the design approved by the Commission in preliminary form on June 20, 1961.

After briefly discussing some aspects of the design, such as the use, on the north elevation, of smaller size windows than those on the south elevation, the members concluded that the building had been

developed in accordance with the preliminary studies, and approved the revised designs.

The Secretary was directed to prepare a letter setting forth the Commission's recommendation. EXHIBIT C

b. Federal Office Building and Courthouse, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, - Status of Exterior Sculpture

Mr. Bernard Frazier, sculptor, showed the members a certrock scale model of his proposed design for an exterior relief sculpture to be carved on the East facade of the building. The sculpture was entitled "Unity" and consisted of five symbolic figures representing Pioneers and American Indians.

The Commission approved the design, which they felt was a successful enlargement of a smaller sketch model to which they had given approval in July 1961.

Mr. Frazier then presented a quarter scale, plasticine study sketch of a proposed relief sculpture for the west facade of the building entitled "Destiny", which portrayed the figure of a goddess flanked by an eagle and bolts of lightning. The members approved the design as presented.

The Secretary was directed to prepare a letter setting forth the Commission's approval of the two designs. EXHIBIT D

Thereafter, at 12:00 noon, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

C. L. Martin

C. L. Martin, Counsel

MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
20 June 1962

AM
9:30 I. CONVENE, ROOM 7000, INTERIOR DEPARTMENT BUILDING

II. SUBMISSIONS-REVIEWS-INTERVIEWS

10:00 1. Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Washington Planetarium and Space Center, Daingerfield Island - Proposed Design
(Mr. Robert Horne, Acting Regional Director, Region Six, National Park Service; Mr. Michael Shea, Attorney; Mr. Herman Weinstein, Executive Secretary, Washington Planetarium and Space Center; Mr. Robert Calhoun Smith, Architect)

10:30 2. District of Columbia Government, Department of Buildings and Grounds

Garrison School, 13th and S Streets, N.W. - Proposed Design (Mr. G. A. Purcell, Liaison Officer, D.C.Dept. of Buildings and Grounds)

11:00 3. General Services Administration, Public Buildings Service

a. Government Printing Office Field Plant, 2d and "D" Sts., S.W. - Proposed Design
(Mr. J. Rowland Snyder, Director, Design Division, PBS, GSA; Mr. George Riggs, Architect of Clas and Riggs)

b. Howard University Womens' Dormitory - Revised Design
(Mr. J. Rowland Snyder; Mr. Hilyard R. Robinson, Architect)

c. Federal Office Building and Courthouse, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma - Status of Exterior Sculpture
(Mr. J. Rowland Snyder; Mr. Bernard Frazier, sculptor)

350

Small RM eye steak 5oz
Half Chicken
Old cuts
Old Roast Beef
~~Pork Loin~~

29 June 1962

Dear Mr. Wirth:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at its meeting on June 20, considered preliminary designs for the proposed Washington Planetarium and Space Center, to be located on Daingerfield Island, south of the existing sailing marina, and in the area now used as a tree nursery by the National Park Service. Mr. Robert Horne, Acting Regional Director, Region Six, National Park Service; Mr. Michael Shea and Mr. Herman Weinstein, representing the Washington Planetarium and Space Center, Inc.; and Mr. Robert Smith, architect, presented the plans.

The preliminary design featured a hemispherical dome, approximately 85 feet in diameter, and 50 feet high, surmounting a circular structure 154 feet in diameter containing space for the central domical projection arena and the various functions related to it. Both the dome and the folded-plate structure comprising the roof over the surrounding spaces would be constructed of reinforced concrete and would be continuous. The architect explained that this design would be followed provided more detailed engineering studies showed it to be structurally feasible.

The members of the Commission approved the general design. They recommended, however, that careful study be made of the exterior finish material that must, by the structural nature of the dome, be able to maintain a satisfactory appearance while withstanding the contractions and expansions that are typical of such structures, especially in the changeable climate of Washington. The members of the Commission were also concerned about the site plan, particularly the relationship of the automobile parking area to the roads approaching the building. As presently conceived, visitors would be confronted on arrival with a foreground of paved areas and cars, with no clear and obstructed view of the structure obtainable except from a short distance away. The members of the Commission believed that there was sufficient freedom on the site to provide a better arrangement of elements and a more clearly defined vehicular and pedestrian circulation. They recommended, therefore, that the site plan be restudied, giving detailed consideration to the vistas of the dome as seen from the George Washington Memorial Parkway, the view from various locations along the approaches

EXHIBIT A

30 June 1952

within the site, and the general treatment and landscaping of the central building in relation to the Potomac River and to the parking and circulation areas.

The proposed Planetarium will be an important addition to the attractions of Washington and will draw a great many visitors. Its design should therefore meet the highest standards. The Commission hopes that the additional studies will enable the project to fulfill this requirement.

The next meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts will be held on September 19. Time will be reserved for review of revisions to the design if they are ready by that time.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley
Chairman

by L.R.Wilson
Secretary

Honorable Conrad Wirth
Director
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington 25, D.C.

27 June 1962

Dear General Clarke:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at its meeting on June 20th, considered the designs for the proposed Garrison Elementary School, to be located on "S" Street, Northwest, between Vermont Avenue and 13th Street, on the site formerly occupied by the old Garrison Elementary School, and using additional land resulting from the closing of 12th Street between "R" and "S" Streets, Northwest. Drawings were presented to the Commission by a representative of the District of Columbia Department of Buildings and Grounds, Mr. Gerald Purcell, who explained its design.

The members of the Commission gave general approval to the project, but regretted that the designs had reached such an advanced stage that precluded changes of any significant nature. Several basic features of the proposed scheme were questioned such as the overall plan arrangement, service access to utility rooms, and the main entrance to the central portion of the building, but to make changes to these elements would require major revisions to all the plans.

As you know, the members of the Commission of Fine Arts have not regarded the recent school construction program with much favor. While they understand the financial problems that beset the District, particularly in its building construction programs, the members of the Commission still believe that most of their objections stem from matters that are essentially those of design. They further believe that it does not necessarily cost more to have a good design and that many communities, also with limited budgets, have achieved better results in the architectural design of schools.

It is our hope, therefore, that the District will make every effort to secure the best architectural advice possible in the furtherance of their school program, that architects be given a program with sufficient freedom to achieve the best designs, and that the Department of Buildings and Grounds secure the required support to carry forward these recommendations. As the Commission has stated before, and as I am sure you agree, the District of Columbia should set the highest standard in the design of its school buildings.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

Brigadier General Frederick J. Clarke
Engineer Commissioner for the District
of Columbia
District Building
Washington 4, D.C.

David E. Finley
Chairman

EXHIBIT B

25 June 1962

Dear Mr. Boutin:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at its meeting of June 20, 1962, considered further developments of the proposed designs for two bas reliefs to be located in the exterior of the Court House and Federal Office Building at Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Mr. J. Rowland Snyder, Director of the Design Division of the Public Buildings Service, and Mr. Bernard Frazier, sculptor, presented a quarter scale model in plaster of the relief for the East facade, and a small sketch model in clay for the West facade.

The design of the quarter scale model, entitled Unity, consisted of a group of five symbolic figures of Pioneers and Indians. The members felt that Mr. Frazier had successfully enlarged and developed his original sketch and they gave the design their approval.

The small sketch for the relief on the Western facade, representing Destiny, portrayed a goddess flanked by an eagle on one side and lightning bolts on the other. The members were of the opinion that the proposed design gave promise of being successfully developed and, accordingly, approved the design as proposed. They asked that the development be submitted by photographs in order to avoid transporting the quarter scale model to Washington.

Photographs of both models are requested for record purposes.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley
Chairman

Honorable Bernard Boutin
Administrator
General Services Administration
Washington 25, D.C.

EXHIBIT D

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